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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS) Migrant workers are neither part of any community they visit nor do they remain together long enough on the road to form their own communities. There exists a total lack of adequate services available to these people while enroute northward from home bases in South California, Florida and South Texas.

The proposed solution suggests that six migrant communities be organized during the six months when they are at their home bases. Since the migrants are reluctant to remain with an organized group, suggested inducements to overcome such reluctance include a work plan organized for a full season's employment, the opportunity to select their own crew leader, and the opportunity to relate to and participate in a fairly stable community both at their home-base and during the migratory season. Free or reduced cost transportation and the guarantee of a full range of comprehensive and uninterrupted community services offered by exceptionally well qualified community service workers who would accompany and live within the migrant community throughout the year would be offered. Special housing, education, other components of community action programs supported by the Economic Opportunity Act at the home base and way-station communities would be made available. The team of mobile community service workers might include master teachers, special remedial teachers, doctors, nurses, welfare workers and family counselors, vocational teachers, educational counselors and school social workers, recreational directors, community resource specialists, day-care attendants, lawyers, community organization specialists, and administrators.

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Traveling Communities with Mobile Community Services: A Possible New Approach to the Migrant Problem.

The Problem: Communities are generally thought of as being fixed in their locations. But they need not be so, as witness the circus community or the community of a troupe of actors or the shipboard community of the staff on the "Good Ship Hope." Few, however, use the term "community" to refer to a group of migrants who perform laboring services on farms along a particular migrant stream. Indeed, if anything characterizes the life of migrants as we know it today, it is that they neither are part of any community they visit nor do they remain together long enough on the road to form their own community. A disorganized human existence and migrant work seem to go hand in hand.

The vicious cycle of migrant life continues from generation to generation: Although a few might enjoy being migrants as a way of life, most of them are forced to accept this work, if they are to work at all, because they lack training to perform more highly skilled work, and they cannot get proper training while chained to a migrant existence.

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They are the lowest of the lowest in terms of annual family income. (They are also a showcase for other known poverty characteristics.) Hence, migrant children must work to supplement the family's income, education being a luxury. Among the so-called "invisible poor," their "invisibility" within a community is more temporary and thus less likely to impinge on a community's sense of responsibility for the poor. And employers of migrants in these communities are confronted with a natural conflict of interest. If the services their communities provide migrants are "too good" it might become difficult in the future to recruit a sufficiently large migrant work force. Further, few communities look forward with eagerness to the sudden and temporary demand for community services should such services be made available for migrants. And not nearly enough of the "way station" communities visited by migrants make their community services available to migrants, even under Public Health Service's Migrant Health Program which is supported by Federal funds. Migrant programs in New Jersey and the "home-based" six-month concentrated education programs for migrant children in Texas, though well-conceived, are hardly adequate. Members of most communities have adequate services available generally on a continuing basis. But migrants are fortunate to receive any services whatsoever at any "way station" along the stream, notwithstanding the total lack of services while enroute and fragmented programs particularly in education, simply are unresponsive to the ever-widening gap of human and educational development between migrants and persons in ordinary communities.

Education of persons from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as urban slum dwellers, even under the most advantageous circumstances, and intensive full-year programs available today, is only beginning to affect the disparity of educational achievement between them and those in the American mainstream. And no migrant child could possibly receive even such a continuing educational experience under migrant programs as they are now offered. Small wonder then that migrants and their children are left further and further behind in the wake of American progress. And the greater they lag behind, the more difficult it becomes for them ever to leave the migrant stream and become absorbed into any American community. Clearly, fragmented community services, though certainly better than no services at all, is not the answer to breaking the migrant's cycle of poverty. An adequate response to this challenge would seem to require not only a far greater allocation of resources for migrant programs but also a more efficient utilization of these resources so as to provide migrants with the full range of community services on a continuing, uninterrupted, and high-quality basis.

Proposed Solution. Most migrants come from one of three home-base areas: Southern California, South Texas, and Florida. They move northward annually along fairly well-defined streams following the various crop seasons and then return home. Accordingly, it is proposed that six (6) migrant communities be organized during the approximate six months migrants are at their home bases. The size of each such community will vary depending on the manpower needs of the particular stream it will

follow and the feasibility of keeping the community relatively intact throughout the journey north and return. Notwithstanding the general reluctance of migrants to remain with an organized group, particularly in the West, it is anticipated that a well-organized campaign based on the following inducements will overcome this problem: (1) a work plan (based on the Department of Labor's annual work plan program) organized for a full season's employment; (2) the opportunity to select their own crew leaders; (3) the opportunity to relate to and participate in a fairly stable community both at their home-base and during the migratory season; (4) free (or reduced-cost) transportation; (5) the guarantee of a full range of comprehensive and uninterrupted community services offered by exceptionally well qualified community service workers who would accompany and live within the migrant community throughout the year; and (6) in coordination with the continuing services, access to special housing, education, and other components of community action programs supported by the Economic Opportunity Act at the home base and way-station communities.

The team of mobile community service workers might include but not be limited to master teachers (artists of the teaching profession who are specially trained and experienced in teaching persons of disadvantaged backgrounds), special remedial teachers, doctors, nurses, welfare workers and family counselors, vocational teachers, educational counselors and school social workers, recreational directors, community resource

specialists, day-care attendants, lawyers, community organization specialists, and administrators. This team might be composed of volunteers, salaried personnel, or a combination thereof, but since they would live among the migrants, most of the funds each might receive would be held in a separate account until he leaves the team. Each team would also assist the Farm Labor Bureau of the Department of Labor at the home base to recruit and organize the migrant community it will serve.

Objectives. This proposal would seek to accomplish the following:

1. To substantially upgrade the living conditions of migrants and their children.
2. To provide migrants and their children with the necessary "tools" to leave the migrant community, should they so desire, and easily adapt to regular community life and other types of work. Special emphasis will be given to preparing migrant children to compete educationally with children in any other segment of American society.
3. To give migrants an opportunity to identify with and participate in the life of an organized community, a fundamental need for all persons.
4. To develop leadership among migrants so that in the long run those who see migratory work as a way of life can eventually organize and sustain the community as a fairly self-sufficient social and economic unit.

5. To make travel an enriching and educational experience.

6. To build a firmer bridge, through the community service team and as a result of the continuous services rendered, between the migrant community and the communities they visit so that migrants will be welcomed to take maximum advantage of the opportunities and services available to them in ordinary communities.

Basic Assumptions. Underlying the above proposal are the following assumptions:

1. For the foreseeable future, despite any predictable rate of farm automation, this nation will have a continuing demand for migratory workers and this demand will be supplied predominantly by domestic workers.

2. Many of the existing problems of migrants stem from their lack of organization.

3. Related to the problem of migrant disorganization and equally important as a bar to access to other fields is the unavailability of continuing, uninterrupted community services designed to close the social and educational gap between them and other citizens.

4. The only alternative to the mobile community service team approach to closing this gap is the "way station" approach.

5. Particularly in education , but in other services as well, the "way station" approach necessarily creates difficult problems of coordination; duplication of facilities, equipment, and manpower for short periods of time; an uneven quality of services;

a grudging community acceptance of migrants, at best; a lack of community services for migrants while traveling; a lack of community services for migrants while traveling; a lack of identity of migrants to any community; and a more expensive and loss efficient utilization of scarce resources available for migrants than the mobile team approach.

6. For the foreseeable future, the needs of migratory workers will continue to be seen as a national and regional problem; hence, national resources will continue to supplement State, local, and foundation support for all migrant programs.

Organization of Services.

Community services, as mentioned previously, will be rendered to each migrant community by a team of community service workers. Approving the actual program of services, devising operating policies and standards, and supervising the program should be vested in a separate organization to which program resources could be channeled. Because each community will move among several States, effective implementation of this type of program will require an extremely high degree of cooperation and coordination between officials of the home-base State, each of the States visited, and the migrant community. Such cooperation can avoid jurisdictional and legal tangles and pave the way for a special activity to be conducted for migrants within each of their borders, an activity which would not interfere with other activities of the State. Thus, representatives of the State Departments of Education, Welfare, Health, and Labor, and the State Boards of Examiners for Medicine and Law for each of the States

involved should be included in such an organization. The organization should also attempt to involve local school systems whenever possible. In addition, representatives of national and state organizations for migrants and the Farm Labor Bureau, should also be included. To the maximum extent feasible, the migrants themselves should be involved in this organization. A number of organizational forms are possible, including the following: (1) the creation of a multi-State agency under an interstate compact ~~approved by Congress,~~ with representatives of public and private agencies serving as advisory committees thereto; (2) a private nonprofit organization composed entirely of public officials, with others serving in an advisory capacity; (3) an existing private nonprofit migrant organization with appropriate officials from each of the States involved serving as advisors and operating under contract with each of the appropriate State agencies to provide certain services , (e.g. education, health, etc.) within its State boundaries; or (4) a combination of several or all of the above three. A different type of coordinating and supervisory organization may be designed for each migrant community depending on the states involved. But clearly, this type of program, must have the approval and involvement of the States affected if it is to succeed.

Once the supervisory organization is established, education al programs, standards, textbooks, curricula, teacher certification, joint recognition of student records and credits, etc. may be worked out with little difficulty.

Organization Within the Migrant Community. In addition to providing services to migrants, the team will attempt to develop leadership within the migrant community. And democratic techniques, such as the election process, can be employed to enable migrants to select their own community leaders, including crew leaders.

Source of Program Resources. In addition to support from foundations, unions, farm organizations, migrant organizations, State and local governments, migrant employers, and other federal programs, funds for such a program could be supported under title III-B (special migrant programs), section 205(a) (for tie-in to regular community action programs), and section 207 (research, training, and demonstration grants) of the Economic Opportunity Act. The VISTA volunteer program could be a major source for community service workers of all types. The surplus food commodity program could also be turned to. Bases, trucks, pullman cars, railroad passenger and dining cars, collapsible buildings, and many other items of equipment could be obtained free from Federal excess property lists and could be included as part of the Federal contribution under a contract between the Office of Economic Opportunity and the sponsoring organization. Favorable rail rates could also be negotiated through GSA to haul railroad cars along the migrant stream. Undoubtedly many other Federal programs and agencies would be of assistance to such a program.

Additional Comments. The program proposed here is only in sketch form. Credit for the mobile service team idea must be given to the National Advisory Council on Agricultural Life and Labor. (See also Sutton,

"Knowing and Teaching the Migrant Child" (1960) for a forerunner of this project.

It should be clearly understood, however, that in the beginning it will affect only about 600 to 700 persons at the most. Hence, existing programs for migrants must continue. This program will merely supplement them and will attempt to demonstrate that through cooperation and a mobilization of resources a better program for breaking the chain of migrant poverty can be achieved. It does not necessarily entail the raising of farm wages (since real income take many forms besides an hourly wage rate), but conceivably, through organization, that also might occur. Such a program in the long-run might also stabilize the migrant work force but, obviously, in the first decade or so, there might be great changes in the composition of a migrant community from one year to the next. It is believed, however, that this approach will, for the first time, provide migrants and their children a real opportunity to change the conditions of their life, if they so choose.

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File - Migrants

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